

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY R. LABEY OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 30TH JANUARY 2017**

Question

Will the Chief Minister advise whether he proposes to make any changes to the parameters of ministerial responsibility, with particular reference to the divide between the formulation and introduction of policy and the implementation of such policy; and, if so, what those changes will entail?

Will the Chief Minister also advise at what point and to what extent, following the approval of a policy, does accountability for implementation and administration of that policy currently move from the relevant Minister to the relevant Department or other body, where applicable, such as an appointed board?

Answer

The relationship between government and the civil service is critically important to the well-being of any democracy.

The civil service is required to implement the decisions of Ministers and to follow our policy direction under the States of Jersey Law, and in turn, Ministers are accountable to the Assembly for the actions of their Department.

However, we have a non-political civil service in Jersey, which means that it is not Ministers who assess the performance of officers, but rather their line managers. We should not wish ourselves into a completely different position where the civil service is beholden to the Council of Ministers. This is the balance we need to strike.

In part, this is why the States' Employment Board is a *joint* body of Ministers and other States Members which employs civil servants and establishes competency frameworks, with the Chief Executive able to give direction to Chief Officers on individual matters concerning their performance.

It is also why the Public Finances Law places a clear obligation on Accounting Officers to be personally accountable for the use of public monies, a practise which avoids political considerations in the management and reporting of financial performance.

As to the arms-length delivery of government policy, the situation remains fundamentally the same, other than in so far as internal line management structures should be replaced by a clear framework that ensures the alignment of policy and delivery, including approval processes for business plans, and the ability to obtain information and to hold to account arms-length bodies (with these bodies also falling under the ambit of the Controller and Auditor General and the Public Accounts Committee).

Of course, Ministers cannot and do not turn a blind eye to performance. If a Minister is unhappy with the performance of their Chief Officer, or believe that implementation of policies and their directions are inadequate or deficient, they can raise the matter with the Chief Executive.